

Building Utilization Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 28, 2026, 6pm-8pm, Stissing Mtn. Jr/Sr HS Library

Dr. Timm opened the sixth meeting of the Building Utilization Advisory Committee at 6:02pm in the library of Stissing Mountain Jr/Sr High School.

Dr. Timm reviewed the outcome of the May 14th meeting. At that meeting, the committee unanimously decided not to further explore the option of closing Seymour Smith (and distributing grade bands between Cold Spring and Stissing). This left only two options.

1. Leave all three buildings open
2. Close Cold Spring (all elementary grades to Seymour Smith)

Dr. Timm suggested that the committee begin drafting their Educational Impact Statement. A copy of the Educational Impact Statement (NYS Education Law §402-a (2)) template drafted by Julie Shaw was distributed. The committee reviewed the template and each of the required sections.

Part A – Enrollment, Need, Community Impact, Fiscal Effects, and Disposability Analysis
Part B – Possible Use of the Building for other Educational or Administrative Purposes
Part C – Impact on Personnel and Cost of Services
Part D – Building Characteristics and Financial Obligations
Part E – Capacity of Receiving School(s)
Part F – Shared Utilization of Space (Per Education Law §414)

The template was designed to articulate the impact of closing a school building. The committee can draft the educational impact from both perspectives.

At the May 14th meeting the committee agreed to divide into sub-committees or groups, with each group working on one or two of the required parts. This will allow each group time to strategize and work together on their sections.

Dr. Timm asked of the committee had any thoughts or comments on how they wanted to divide into groups. *There were no comments from the committee.*

Dr. Timm felt that a couple of the parts were stand-alone items, while other parts could be linked together. He stated that Part A and Part B were each a stand-alone item, while Parts C and D, and Parts E and F could be linked together.

This will allow the committee to break into 4 groups. He asked if this configuration was agreeable to the group. *There were no objections from the committee.*

Dr. Timm suggested that the committee divide into the four groups that evening, meet and begin strategizing. Each group can coordinate how and when they want to meet (either in person or via email), and the entire committee will plan to meet again at the end of June.

Dr. Timm assigned an administrator as a group leader in each of the four groups. Administrators will have access the necessary data. The committee members were free to join whichever group they were most interested in.

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Part A Group Leader - Julia Tomaine
Part B Group Leader - Janine Babcock
Parts C+D Group Leader – Laura Rafferty
Parts E+F Group Leader – Gian Starr

A committee member questioned if they will also identify what the long-term plan will be. Is the long-term plan to move to one campus?

Another committee member felt that adding an elementary campus to Cold Spring in 5-7 years and closing Seymour would be a viable option. He felt that Seymour Smith would be more marketable to sell, and considers it to be the least energy efficient of the three buildings. From a long-term perspective, he felt this was worth considering. He stated that closing a building now was just a short-term fix and the district needed to “Trim the fat”.

Dr. Timm replied that a long-term plan can be discussed once the committee has identified a short-term plan and drafted an Educational Impact Statement. He then asked the committee if they were interested in pursuing additional meetings to work out a long-term plan.

A committee member commented that a long-term plan would be too much to ask of the committee. She felt that members would get “bogged down” in the conversation and feel overwhelmed.

A committee member suggested that the Educational Impact Statement include suggestions for a long-term plan. Dr. Timm stated that we could create an additional *Part G – Supplemental Analysis Section*, for any committee members interested in exploring long-term suggestions.

Dr. Timm further stated that while he felt the district should eventually move to one campus, that does not mean it will necessarily happen. Moving everyone to one building would require a lot of renovation and would come at a big expense. One potential option would be a 2 building (Seymour and Stissing), one bell system. The buses could pick up and drop off students all at once, staggering arrival and dismissal times by ten minutes. Dr. Timm explained that moving to one campus is a challenging and costly endeavor and the coming few years will be very telling for school district finances.

It would be feasible for Seymour and Stissing to operate on a staggered, one bell system. This approach would not work with Cold Spring and Stissing.

A committee member expressed her opinion that the cost savings for not transporting elementary students between Cold Spring and Seymour should be considered. It makes more sense to have all the buses travelling to a central location.

A committee member stated that closing Cold Spring would not have fixed the budget issue facing the district this year. Dr. Timm disagreed.

She further stated that reductions have been made to get the budget down to the tax cap without closing the building. She felt that the work being accomplished by the committee has been ignored

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in the past by administration and the Board of Education. As a committee, they should continue to push for long-term planning and what long-term effects will be. She questioned how sustainable it will be to keep Seymour Smith, our oldest building, open. She expressed that the Board and the administration need to think about the future.

A committee member called the committee back to task. The Building Utilization Advisory Committee was created by the Board of Education with the purpose of drafting an impact statement on the effect of closing a school building; not to define a long-term solution. We need to stay focused on the task.

A committee member commented that it seemed as if we were at an impasse between two thought processes. How can we work together as a committee with two completely different mindsets?

Dr. Timm reminded the committee of the decision made at the last meeting. At this point, the only building potentially being closed is Cold Spring. The option of closing Seymour Smith was taken off the table at the last meeting.

Mrs. Babcock commented that the special class setting would run more efficiently if all elementary grades were under one roof. Shared staff could be utilized more effectively.

Julie Shaw, School District Counsel, arrived at 6:45pm. Ms. Shaw asked if anyone had questions/comments regarding the impact statement template.

Part A Questions/Comments -

A committee member inquired if we had the historical data regarding enrollment projections. Dr. Timm replied yes, and referred him to the highlighted presentation from the first committee meeting.

Part B Questions/Comments – none.

Part C Questions/Comments -

A committee member commented that addressing personnel needs is “Murky waters”. Dr. Timm agreed and felt that it is better to provide a conservative range and an aggressive range when it comes to impact on personnel. Reductions in staff can be done methodically and not aggressively.

Part D Questions/Comments – none.

Part E Questions/Comments -

A committee member asked what it mean to “absorb” displaced students. This would apply to districts with more than one other elementary school where students could be relocated.

Part F Questions/Comments – none.

Part G Questions/Comments – none.

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At 7pm the committee broke into groups to begin their work. Dr. Timm reiterated that everyone will have a month to work together. The committee will reconvene at the end of June to see where we are in drafting the statement.

Part A – Enrollment, Need, Community Impact, Fiscal Effects, and Disposability Analysis

Group leader: Julia Tomaine

Committee members: Brooke Brown, Sean Devine, Ann Simmons, Glenn Weinrich

Part B – Possible Use of the Building for other Educational or Administrative Purposes

Group leader: Janine Babcock

Committee members: Sara McGhee

Part C – Impact on Personnel and Cost of Services & Part D – Building Characteristics and Financial Obligations

Group leader: Laura Rafferty

Committee members: Nick Dean -alternate (Renee Rundall), Joan Taylor, Sarah Jones, Renee Shea, Kyle Odell

Part E – Capacity of Receiving School(s) & Part F – Shared Utilization of Space (Per Education Law §414)

Group leader: Gian Starr

Committee members: Lauren Osterman and Colleen Lutz

Part G – Supplemental Analysis Section

Group leader: No committee members joined this group. Therefore, no group leader was assigned.

Committee members: No committee members joined this group.

Committee members absent: Trudi Kubsch, Mechelle Burdick-Kusko, Brian Walsh, Tara Silberberg, Renee Rundall

The committee reconvened at 7:45pm. Dr. Timm inquired if the breakout session was productive and if there was a need or want to share anything.

A committee member suggested that exhibits to sections should also be linked on the website. Mrs. Tomaine will make certain all information on the website is linked appropriately.

If any groups want to meet in-person on June 11th they are free to do so. Please contact the administrator leader in the group or Mrs. Tomaine to arrange for space on June 11th.

The meeting adjourned at 8pm.